



ISD #466

DASSEL-COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL

October 2010 Newsletter

COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

School is now well under way, learning adventures are occurring in every classroom, and students have, I hope, developed an appropriate mix of homework, activities, and play for their after school and evening hours. Helping your children establish a routine time and place for homework completion can not only help prepare them for success at a school, but can also help them begin to develop life skills of self-discipline

and responsibility. I also encourage you to have frequent and meaningful conversations with your children about all their experiences at school. Recounting learned information can help children move that information from short-term to long-term memory. Recounting social experiences can help children process some of the perplexing and, sometimes, troubling relationship issues associated with adolescence.

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CAMPUS SOFTWARE

In our last newsletter I wrote about our implementation of a new student information software package called Infinite Campus. By now many of you have established an Internet-based Campus Portal account that allows you to keep track of your child's grades, assignments, lunch account, and test scores. For those of you who are already accessing the Portal, please be patient as teachers continue to learn about the features of the software and how to best use them to communicate with you. By the end of the first trimester

you should see grades posted in a timely manner, information regarding upcoming, current and past assignments, and "newsletter" notes about class activities. For those of you who have not, yet, established your Portal account (or need technical assistance with your existing account) please call the middle school office at 320-286-4100, ext 1600.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

On October 18 & 19 we will offer arena style parent-teacher conferences from 4:00 - 8:00. The format for these conferences allows you to visit with all of your child's teachers, so that you can establish a relationship early in the year. While we try to keep these conferences relatively short in order to accommodate numerous parent meetings, the waiting lines to see particular teachers can sometimes get a bit long, and you may have to be a little patient.

We will offer another opportunity for formal conferences on January 24 & 27. However, any time during the year you would like to meet with a teacher, we encourage you to contact us to arrange a before or after school conference.

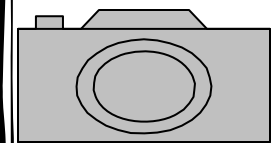
READING COUNTS AT DCMS

Reading Counts is a motivational reading program where students read books and then take computerized quizzes in order to gain points. The book's points are determined by the level of reading difficulty and number of pages. To encourage student participation, the Media Center

sponsors monthly competitions as well as trimester drawings for prizes. The 2010-2011 school goal is to earn more than 135,000 points.



Picture re-takes will be on Thursday, October 14.



HEADLINES IN SCHOOL HEALTH

~Kelly Krueger, LSN

The initial Vision and hearing screening took place on September 20th. Screening guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) are followed. MDH recommends screening students in 5th and 7th grade. We will also include children in which a vision or hearing concern is brought to our attention by parents, teachers or students.

Good vision and hearing is an essential key to learning. It is very important to conduct screening so that any problems can be detected at an early age. The screening is not diagnostic; only an indication to whether a possible problem may be present. Further evaluation by your health care provider will be needed to determine if a problem exists. If you have specific concerns regarding your child, please call me at x1804.

I, along with our wonderful, trained volunteers will conduct the screenings. A re-screening will be held on October 5th for those students who do not pass the initial screening. If, at this point your child does not pass, you will receive a referral letter recommending your child be seen by his/her health care provider. If you do not receive a letter by the end of November, your child has passed and no follow up is necessary.

We are always in need of volunteers to help with this process! If you would like to help out in the future, please call me and I will add you to the volunteer list. Thank you in advance!

TOP DCMS READING COUNTS READERS RECOGNIZED IN NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC READING CONTEST

Scholastic, the company who owns the Reading Counts program, sponsored a contest last spring recognizing the nation's four most avid readers. They asked each school to submit the names of their students who earned the most points between January 1st to May 14th. While none of our students won top four placement, this summer Scholastic did recognize two of our readers as high point earners in their national contest. We wish to congratulate the following students for earning this recognition:

8th Grade: Gretta Pokornowski (1,303 points)

6th Grade: Nathan Weckwerth (1,245 points)



Gretta Pokornowski



Nathan Weckwerth

CHARGER CAFÉ

Welcome to the Charger Café, and thank you for supporting our school lunch program. We serve a variety of choices throughout the week. Besides offering hot meals everyday, we can also provide your children with a bag lunch for field trips. If your child would like a bag lunch from our café for a field trip, please let us know one day ahead of time.

All free and reduced students are eligible for a free breakfast.

Thank you again from the Charger Café. We look forward to serving your children.

Barb Quast, Middle School Cook Manager

PRINTING FEES

Due to budget constraints, we are unable to provide students the opportunity to print in color for free. Color printing will be restricted to items teachers believe students will keep long term (example: personal bibliography projects). With staff permission, students may be given the opportunity to print an assignment in color. The charge for color printing is \$.50 per page.

We are always looking for parents willing to assist with various middle school activities. If you would like to be added to our list of volunteers, please contact Peggy Smith, our volunteer coordinator, at peggy.smith@dc.k12.mn.us or call Cindy in the middle school office.

MUSIC NOTES



We are in full swing in the music department already and looking at a great year ahead! Here are just a few reminders for you and your family:

Community Education offers Music Lessons for all students that are interested in one on one instruction to help your student advance with their instrument or learn another instrument. This is a great way to get help for struggling students or challenge students that are interested. Call community education for more information or contact a music instructor.

Community Education sponsored MS Jazz Band Program has started! 7th and 8th Graders can join the morning groups that meet once a week during trimester 1 and 2. The groups will then perform at MS concerts. Contact Community Education and Mr. Roeser if you are interested or need more information.

Community Education sponsored MS Spotlight/Morning Choir is also being offered again this year. Select students rehearse once a week and prepare music for

MS Concerts. Contact Community Education and Mrs. Beaton if you are interested or need more information. 7th and 8th Graders can join the morning groups that meet once a week during trimester 1 and 2. The groups will then perform at MS concerts.

Trimester 1 Concert Dates and Times (also posted on the Middle School website and Music Staff websites):

Tuesday, November 23rd - 7th Band and Choir Concert 6:30 pm PAC

Tuesday, November 23rd - 8th Band and Choir Concert 8pm PAC

Tuesday, December 7th - 5th Band and Choir Concert 6:30 pm PAC

Tuesday, December 7th - 6th Band and Choir Concert 7:30 pm PAC

SIXTH GRADE NEWS

Science and Health News

Science - We began the year by doing a hands-on Oobleck investigation. Students practiced the scientific method by experimenting with this mysterious substance. After discovering the many ways Oobleck may be used, students created an Oobleck product and tried to market it

We are currently studying matter, elements, and the composition of atoms. Students will be determining the various amounts of each type of element that makes up the human body. In addition, students will compare and contrast the size of protons, neutrons, and electrons. The unit will conclude with a study of physical properties, elements and compounds, as well as solids, liquids, and gases.

Health - The next health unit is called "Growth and Development". Students will analyze the parts, functions, and relationships among body systems. They will also study the changes that accompany adolescence and the importance of developing healthful habits. As a part of this study, we will be taking a day to talk about the maturation process.

WANTED

Pork and venison hearts for 6th grade health classes to dissect. Please contact Brian Bessingpas (1621), Paula Trisko (1623), or Katie Erickson (1622) if you are able to donate. Thanks!



Social Studies

The sixth graders have begun their year by studying early Minnesotans. They learned about different artifacts left behind by these ancient people. Next, students will be learning about the Dakota and Ojibwe, Minnesota's first Native American groups.

A major part of the sixth grade curriculum is the Minnesota Booklet. We have begun this long term project that will be due March 21, 2011. Students have been completing maps of Minnesota as part of their booklet project.

Math

In sixth grade math we are in the process of completing chapter 1. In chapter 1 the students explored with: ordering and comparing whole numbers, estimating, exponents, order of operations, mental math, and working on computation problems.

The next unit the students get to investigate is our algebra unit (Chapter 2). In this chapter the students are introduced to fundamental algebraic concepts such as variables and algebraic expressions. The students are learning how to solve algebraic equations by using inverse operations and to solve word problems by writing algebraic equations.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your child, please feel free to contact us. All of us here are interested in your child and want to be sure that this year's mathematics experiences are enjoyable and promote a firm understanding of mathematics. Thanks for all the support you give your child with homework and the basic facts.

2010-11 MAUD HART LOVELACE PROGRAM NOMINEES

Every year, the Middle School participates in the Maud Hart Lovelace reading program. The program is named after a famous Minnesota author. The purpose of this program is to promote reading of students in Grades 3-8. To participate in the program, students need to read at least 3 of the 20 nominated titles in this year's contest. In the spring, eligible students are invited to vote for their favorite book. The results are then sent in and combined with results from thousands of students in schools across Minnesota. Following are the titles in this year's contest:

Division I

- One Handed Catch (30)
by Auch
- Ordinary Boy: The Hero Revealed (22)
by Boniface
- No Talking (14)
by Clements

Division I cont.

- Sloppy Copy Slipup (10)
by DiSalvo
- Lemonade War (14)
by Davies
- Eleven (16)
by Giff
- Found (30)
by Haddix
- Deep and Dark and Dangerous (28)
by Hahn
- How to Save Your Tail (14)
by Hanson
- How to Steal a Dog (18)
by O'Connor
- A Crooked Kind of Perfect (16)
by Urban
- Coast Watcher (14)
by Weston

Division II

- If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period (18)
by Choldenko

Division II cont.

- Eleven (16)
by Giff
- Found (30)
by Haddix
- Deep and Dark and Dangerous (28)
by Hahn
- Alabama Moon (34)
by Key
- Black Duck (28)
by Lisle
- Every Soul a Star (38)
by Mass
- How to Steal a Dog (18)
by O'Connor
- All of the Above (20)
by Pearsall
- Night of the Howling Dogs (22)
by Salisbury
- Saturday Night Dirt (20)
by Weaver
- Someone Named Eva (26)
by Wolf

*Mature Readers Only

COMPUTER DISKS AND VIRUSES

We welcome students to bring disks and USB drives to school so they can save homework to bring home to complete on their home computers. Students may buy disks from the Media Center for \$.50. We do have antivirus programs on the network and individual computer workstations, but we can not guarantee that your son/daughter will not bring a virus home on their disks. To better protect your home computer and our computers at school, it is recommended that you have an updated antivirus program installed on your home computer.

MIDDLE SCHOOL WEBSITE

We encourage you to visit our website on a regular basis. It is updated daily and includes information on the following:

- Parent Portal to access grade books and attendance and homework
- Student Activity/Sports schedules
- Staff lists with emails and phone extensions
- Monthly calendars listing upcoming events
- Monthly newsletters
- Monthly lunch menus
- Grade level links to teacher websites, instructional websites and curriculum
- Student Handbook
- Volunteer opportunities



MS Students Licensed for Internet

All Middle School students will receive instruction on the district's Internet/Computer Network Policy and will be licensed to use the Internet. Their license is the barcode with the computer sticker on their agenda books. An overview of the Internet Policy at the Middle School can be found in the students' agenda books. Following are the basic expectations for students' use of the Internet at the Middle School:

- Student must be supervised by an adult when using the Internet
- Students must have an educational purpose for using the Internet (school assignments)
- Students must have their Internet license present in order to use the Internet
- No inappropriate use of computers or Internet (see handbook and district policy)
- No email use at the Middle School

These expectations help ensure that students will safely navigate the web while they use the Internet at school to meet their curricular needs.

PTA

The mission of the Dassel-Cokato PTA is to foster communication between schools and families as well as supporting children in their work of learning. The Dassel-Cokato PTA hopes to create a collaborative effort with the schools, community, and parents/guardians to ensure a quality, well-rounded education for the children in the D-C area.

Start the new school year off right by becoming a Dassel Cokato PTA member! The PTA is a group of community members that work together to contribute to the betterment of our schools and community. Being a PTA member will allow you to:

- Be connected and informed about our schools through PTA involvement and advocacy.
- Influence decisions that affect your child's learning.
- Become more informed about topics that affect our children and their school.
- Get to know school administration and some school board members.
- Receive emailed copies of school board minutes and agendas.
- Meet other community members.

New this year, the PTA will be meeting bi-monthly. Our meetings will be held October 7th, December 2nd, February 3rd, and April 7th. Each of these meetings will be held in the high school media center from 6:30-8:00.

Thursday, October 7th will be an interesting and informative meeting. Superintendent Jeff Powers will be discussing policies and guidelines used in making the decision to close school or have a two hour late start. We welcome all community members to join us for this meeting.

GIVE YOUR OLD BOOKS A NEW HOME

What types of books are needed?

Many families have books at their homes that they no longer want or use. Some of these books were once best loved books that have been outgrown. We would appreciate your donation of new or gently used books preschool level to the 8th grade level. We would like to encourage the middle school students and their families to participate in the **S.H.A.R.E** books with our community program.

S.H.A.R.E. stands for

**Students
Helping
All to
Read
Everywhere**

Our GOAL is to have the students at the middle school work together to promote **READING** in our Community by helping the children in our community access books.

Book boxes will be created with the donated books. These boxes will be delivered to local businesses and families in need.

Where can you bring the books you would like to donate?

A collection box will be located in the office at Dassel Cokato Middle School. Students may also give their book donations to their Power Hour teacher.

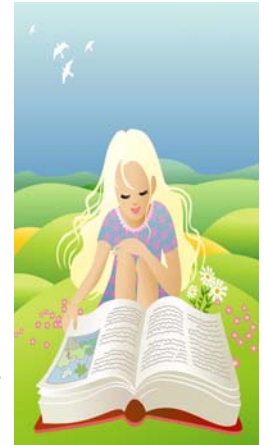
READING COUNTS FUNDRAISERS

The Middle School Media Center collects the following items to raise funds to support our Reading Counts Program:

- Milktops (Land O' Lakes and Kemps)
- General Mills Boxtops
- Cell Phones
- Printer Cartridges
- Target's Take Charge of Education

Your son/daughter can drop collected items off in the Media Center. We also invite your place of business to participate in the cell phone and printer cartridge recycling programs. We encourage you to share the attached business letter with your employer.

Our school also participates in Target's charge card program. Target donates 1% of their charged sales receipts to a school. If you have a Target charge card, please visit their customer service counter to designate D-C Middle School as the recipient of the 1% donations.



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